

Memorial Day ceremony
Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
National Cemetery
May 26, 2014 8 a.m.

Thank you, Ted ... and good morning, everyone.

I am deeply honored to be back here on this poignant Memorial Day ... as we remember those brave and patriotic countrymen whose noble sacrifice saved our great nation – not once ... but over and over again, generation after generation.

We owe these courageous men and women who served in uniform an enormous debt – and that certainly includes our senior senator, John McCain ... Director Vogt ... and County Attorney Bill Montgomery.

Thank you, gentlemen. And thank all of you veterans here today -- for your brave and honorable service.

Throughout our nation's history, American service members have offered up their lives for us ... for their country ... and for the liberty we cherish today.

If all we can offer them is our gratitude and respect, we must do so eternally.

Many, many Americans have buttoned up the uniform, shouldered the weapon, and volunteered to stand guard in distant and hostile lands, defending our country and citizens back home.

We have sent more than 45 million of our sons and daughters off to protect our nation since that first shot rang out on the Lexington town green.

We lost more than a million of them, defending their few square inches of freedom in places like Flanders Field, Normandy, the Kandahar Province, Inchon and the Mekong Delta.

Some of them remain interred near where they fell -- lasting monuments for the people of the world to realize just how

much liberty is valued by the citizens of the United States of America.

Many of our service members are buried right here, all around us, where we grateful Americans can honor them personally, can deliver to them our flowers, our flags and our heartfelt appreciation.

In part, that's why we are here this morning.

Today -- on the day this great nation set aside to remember and honor the sacrifice of our fallen soldiers, sailors, marines and airmen -- we come here to salute them, to thank them, to say a prayer for them ... and maybe shed a tear or two.

But most of all, we come here to let their families know -- and make subsequent generations understand -- what it takes to defend our uniquely American liberty.

President Reagan once said that freedom is never more than a single generation from extinction -- that it can't simply be passed from parents to children in the bloodstream.

No, freedom must be protected and fought for, generation after generation. And since the beginning of our nation, each generation of Americans has stepped up when called.

The evidence is all around you.

There is a hero under every stone.

To each of them we say: “Thank you. Thank you so very much.”

On this day, we also honor those heroes who continue to serve, who go out every single day amid the dust and danger to preserve freedom for a grateful nation.

Without them, there would be no America.

Without them, there would be precious little liberty anywhere in the world.

As governor of this great state, and in honor of this solemn occasion, I have proclaimed today Arizona Memorial Day.

And I am honored to present the Arizona Memorial Day proclamation to Jerry Rainey, Director of the National Memorial Cemetery of Arizona.

Over 200 years ago, George Washington uttered some very important words when he said, and I quote:

“The willingness with which our young people are likely to serve in any war -- no matter how justified -- shall be directly proportional to how they perceive the veterans of earlier wars were treated ... and appreciated ... by their nation.”

I am truly honored to be a part of such a distinguished ceremony today, as we remember and honor the many great veterans who served our country with absolute dedication.

Their sacrifice and service will always inspire fellow American men and women to accomplish great things.

May God bless and protect all of our military and our veterans. And may God always bless and preserve the United States of America – the land of the free ... so honorably defended by the brave. Thank you.